

ILLINOIS FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS THE CALL FOR
MEDICAID AND STATE PENSION REFORM

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Bloomington, Ill. — The Illinois Farm Bureau supports Governor Pat Quinn's call for the Illinois General Assembly to pass legislation reforming the state's Medicaid and state pension systems before the May 31, 2012 end of the General Assembly spring session.

"Bold steps are needed to tackle the growing state budget problem and the estimated \$83 billion unfunded pension liability," said Philip Nelson, President, Illinois Farm Bureau. "The ever-increasing cost of providing necessary care to Illinois residents through Medicaid needs to be addressed. We credit the Governor for putting forward a plan to do that."

The Governor has also stepped forward to call for the State Legislature to tackle the state's unfunded pension liabilities.

"It is not easy for someone to take on the pension system and we commend the Governor for doing that," Nelson said. "If the state's pension liability is not addressed, it will further draw the state's budget into a bigger hole. This will lead to a continuation of a business climate in Illinois that is not attractive for businesses to locate or expand here."

Legislative leadership on these issues also cannot be ignored. Leaders in all caucuses have been working diligently to craft reform packages. The Illinois Farm Bureau recognizes that leadership and encourages legislative leaders and the Governor to continue their work to address the Medicaid and pension issues.

Illinois Farm Bureau members have had a long-standing belief, expressed in the organization's policies set by the members through a democratic process, that Medicaid eligibility requirements for Illinois residents should be established in a fair and equitable manner.

"Calling upon the members of the General Assembly to review the current system and bring about reform is necessary for carrying out the beliefs of our members," Nelson said.

Also contained in the organization's policies is a belief that the state needs to bring about vital and long-lasting reform of the state's pension systems to turn around Illinois' fiscal climate.

"The fiscal crisis in the State of Illinois casts a huge cloud over the state and its economy," Nelson said. "Once pension reforms are approved and implemented, Illinois' economy should strengthen and improve."

Nelson added that fixing both the Medicaid and state pension systems is necessary and commendable.

“We realize this will not be an easy task, but we encourage Governor Quinn and the members of the Illinois General Assembly to accomplish this goal in the next several weeks,” Nelson said. “We must all stand up and let our state elected officials know that we support their efforts to bring about this critical reform.”

The Illinois Farm Bureau is a member of the American Farm Bureau Federation, a national organization of farmers and ranchers. Founded in 1916, IFB is a non-profit, membership organization controlled by farmers who join through their County Farm Bureau. IFB has a total membership of more than 420,500 and a voting membership of 82,973. IFB represents two out of three Illinois farmers.

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